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TESTIMONY

Environmental Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

Public Hearing, February 4, 2013

**HB 5801, "AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE BRIDGEPORT WATER POLLUTION
CONTROL AUTHORITY TO LEVY FEES ON STORM WATER MATERIALS."**

Provided by: Davey Ives, Environmental Projects Coordinator, City of Bridgeport

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the important issue of storm water management.

In older Connecticut cities like Bridgeport, New Haven, New London, and Hartford, combined sewer systems, where one pipe holds both storm water and sanitary water, create a complex issue for modern municipalities. How to manage these systems is further complicated because parts of our water systems (water supply, sanitary water, and storm water) have been privatized while others have remained under the purview of municipalities.

The State of Connecticut is diligently providing support to separate and modernize our hundred-plus year-old water systems. The separation process is slow and lengthy. While it will deliver long-term results and improve water quality, something must be done to address the perpetual funding issues in our water treatment facilities to keep up with paying bonding obligations.

Over sixty percent (60%) of all water the Bridgeport Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) treats comes from inflow and infiltration. The majority of inflow and infiltration is storm water finding its way into our combined sewer system. This costs the WPCA \$7,411,887 annually – or 24% of the system's total revenues. This is fresh water that doesn't need to be treated but the WPCA treats anyways because it's an older system. Most of this water comes from runoff generated by impervious surfaces in Bridgeport.

Essentially this storm water gets treated for free. It is factored into the rate structure, but it makes no difference to a user's monthly bill whether their site contributes storm water runoff to the sewer system – costing the WPCA money, or if their site contains that water on site – saving the WPCA money. This situation inequitably distributes the burden of paying for storm water to single family residents that have low runoff footprints compared to large commercial properties with large parking lots and/or impervious surfaces that generate significantly more runoff and cost the WPCA more to service.

The WPCA and the City can use this new storm water billing authority to piggy-back off of existing services the WPCA provides and more equitably service its constituents. Allowing the WPCA to levy fees based on storm water, with strict City oversight and approval, would more ethically allocate the burden of storm water finance to those that contribute most to the problem.

Sincerely,

Davey Ives